

## Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 AGR-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 /076 W

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R 111312Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY MASERU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5521

INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

UNCLAS MASERU 0139

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, EAGR, LT

SUBJECT: HEAVY RAINS CAUSING CROP DAMAGE, HINDERING FOOD  
TRANSPORT

1. SUMMARY: THREE MONTHS OF CONTINUOUS, RECORD-BREAKING RAINS HAVE CAUSED CONSIDERABLE CROP DAMAGE IN LESOTHO AND HAVE PREVENTED FOOD AND OTHER ESSENTIALS FROM BEING TRANSPORTED TO REMOTE AREAS. GOVERNMENT HAS DECLARED A LIMITED NATIONAL DISASTER TO COPE WITH PROBLEM. NO IMMEDIATE SHORTAGE OF FOOD IS EVIDENT, BUT IF ANTICIPATED CROP LOSSES OCCUR, LESOTHO MAY REQUIRE ADDITIONAL FOOD AID BY AROUND DECEMBER. GOVERNMENT PROBABLY CAN MEET IMMEDIATE NEEDS FOR SUBSIDIZED TRANSPORT TO REMOTE AREAS WITH ASSISTANCE FROM CRS AND CARE. DO NOT EXPECT ANY REQUEST FOR IMMEDIATE U.S. ASSISTANCE.

2. ACTING ON RECOMMENDATION OF GOL DISASTER RELIEF COMMITTEE, PRIME MINISTER HAS DECLARED AN "EMERGENCY FOOD SITUATION" IN DESIGNATED MOUNTAIN AREAS. EMERGENCY IS NOT IN REGARD TOTAL FOOD SUPPLY SITUATION IN LESOTHO, WHICH IS RELATIVELY GOOD, BUT SHORTAGE OF SUPPLIES IN MOUNTAIN AREAS WHICH HAVE BEEN ISOLATED DUE EXTREMELY HEAVY RAINS. COMMERCIAL TRADERS IN SOME AREAS HAVE RUN OUT OF FOOD ENTIRELY, AND IMMEDIATE ACTION PLANNED IS TO PROVIDE TRANSPORT OF COMMERCIAL FOODS TO THESE STORES. IT IS BELIEVED THAT SOME ISOLATED VILLAGES MAY BE ALSO OUT OF FOOD, WHICH WOULD REQUIRE AIR-DROPS, BUT THIS HAS NOT YET BEEN DETERMINED.

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EM EMBASSY/OSARAC HAVE NOT YET BEEN APPROACHED FOR ASSIST-

ANCE, AND IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT REQUESTS ARE BEING CONSIDERED AT THIS TIME. CARE AND CRS, WHICH ARE ON DISASTER COMMITTEE, HAVE OFFERED TO ASSIST BY BUYING LOCAL FOOD FOR AIR DROPPING TO ISOLATED VILLAGES AS NECESSARY (CARE) AND BY ALLOCATING MORE PL-480 FOOD TO BE USED IN ROAD REPAIR (CRS).

4. MEASUREMENT OF LONGER RUN IMPACT OF RAINS ON FOOD SUPPLY SITUATION NOT POSSIBLE AT THIS TIME. LOWLAND WHEAT HARVEST APPARENTLY A TOTAL LOSS, BUT THIS IS AN EXPORT PRODUCT. SITUATION RE UPLAND WHEAT NOT KNOWN. CORN, WHICH IS HARVESTED STARTING IN MAY, IS BEGINNING TO BE AFFECTED. IF CORN CROP EXTREMELY POOR, IT MAY BEGIN TO IMPACT ON FOOD SUPPLY SITUATION IN DEC/JAN PERIOD AND RESULT IN REQUESTS FOR LARGER PL-480 SHIPMENTS. INDICATIONS ARE THAT EMERGENCY PL-480 SHIPMENTS WILL NOT BE NECESSARY.  
HAUGHT

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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** EAID, EAGR, LT  
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